SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE RISE IN DISCRIMINATION, INTOLERANCE AND HATE CRIMES IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CONTEXT BY HONOURABLE ALEXANDER K. AFENYO-MARKIN, MP FOR EFFUTU - 16 MARCH, 2017

Mr Speaker, I commend Hon Okudzeto Ablakwa for this very all-inclusive Statement which deals with discrimination. It goes into international politics; it deals with extremism in national politics and all that. Of course, it does not come as a surprise. He was one time a student leader; he wrote articles in The Chronicle. Mr Speaker, he began well and today, he is the Hon Ranking Member for the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

This is a very mature Statement and having had the opportunity of reading it before it was read on the floor of the House, I have formed certain opinions and I hereby express same. But before I do so, Mr Speaker, I have just remembered a favourite quote from a book I read which I do not remember. It states:

“We are all sprung from the same stock. Partakers of the same nature and sharers in the same hope. And although distinctions amongst men are necessary to preserve sub ordination, yet ought no eminence of situation make us feel superior over the other for he who is placed at the lowest ebb of fortune’s wheel is equally entitled to our regard as a time will come the wisest of men knows not how soon when all distinctions will cease and death, the grand leveller of all human greatness, reduce us to the same state.”

Mr Speaker, like I said, I do not remember where I read this from. Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, rightly so. I know you were also a student of history. Mr Speaker, basically, what this writer tells all of us is that whether short, tall, black or white, we are the same and that we should not, for a moment, think that because today we find ourselves better than others, we would act in a manner to undermine their rights both in law inherent.

Mr Speaker, I took what happened in South Africa some few weeks ago as something never to have happened in South Africa by South Africans. Mr Speaker, that we all sympathised with them when they went through apartheid, and today because of economic situation, their brothers in their country, Zimbabweans, Namibians, Nigerians, Ghanaians and people from other races were butchered, goodness.

Mr Speaker, this should never happen but it has and I am happy it has taken the courage of Hon Okudzeto Ablakwa to add his voice to the many who hold the view that we must treat each other fairly and with love. Mr Speaker, another important matter Hon Okudzeto Ablakwa brought to our attention is this rising extremism in politics in certain parts of the world. He did not include Ghana, but perhaps, I may want to venture that there are those who have extremist views when it comes to our own national politics.

Today, what the Hon Member said is that, we should all come to the centre and look at the beauty of our democracy. The way and manner after eight years his side of the House accepted the
results and they are cooperating. Although sometimes, we disagree with the way they cooperate, they are cooperating. Mr Speaker, can I not even spice it?

Mr Speaker, although sometimes some people hold the view that the cooperation is not as expected, it is still cooperation and we all come to a point where we can walk to each other’s offices, share a few words, take a drink and, advise each other. Mr Speaker, I can specify that, I once had a strong debate, a heated one on radio with the Hon Deputy Minority Leader, who was then my Chairman. But soon thereafter, I went to his office and he gave me a can coke. Mr Speaker, I am sure many people who might have heard us on Joy FM would have thought that these people would never talk to each other.

Mr Speaker, it is not enough for us to talk about moderation in our body politics, but also create the impression that we are far apart. I think Ghanaians should know that we the active political players are against extremism. This is because all these issues of lawlessness that ensued after the 2016 Elections, if those people out there really knew that Hon Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa and I are not enemies, I am sure they would have advised themselves.

Mr Speaker, we do not disclose that to them so I am sure this is a call on everybody; from the polling station executives to the national chairmen, from the ward executives to the national chairmen. All political players, all activists should come to the realisation that the way to build mother Ghana is not through extremists’ views.

The way we conduct ourselves on radio, the way we express views, the way we talk about people, the way allegations are made, where if it were us, we would want to be given the opportunity to be heard, but if it is somebody, then, he is guilty simpliciter. Mr Speaker, today, we are being told that extremism is not the way to go. Mr Speaker, for the sake of time, I would rather find another opportunity to discuss further this Statement and express additional views.

I thank you very much for the opportunity.